



Action on Climate in Teignbridge's Wildlife Warden Scheme's quarterly report to funders and supporters. 23.04.21



www.actionclimateteignbridge.org

Flavio, our Coordinator, has:

- Set up and chaired numerous Zoom meetings.
- Provided support and advice to WWs and responded to hundreds of emails from WWs and many other interested people.
- Kept in touch with WWs by providing newsletters and offering training opportunities.
- Continued to manage an email discussion group (groups.io) and a Facebook discussion group.
- Set up infrastructure for recording information about WWs, including their skills, what training they have completed and projects. Information about current projects can be found on our interactive map [Wildlife Warden Areas Map – ACT Wildlife Wardens \(actionclimateteignbridge.org\)](http://www.actionclimateteignbridge.org/wildlife-warden-areas-map).
- Continued to update the resources list with new material <https://www.actionclimateteignbridge.org/wildlife-wardens-resources/>
- Offered an ACT email address to all WWs. Many parishes now also have their own ACT email address, which can be found on the interactive map (emails sent to these addresses are forwarded to all WWs within a parish).

The scheme continues to develop:

- 65 people have applied to be a Wildlife Warden. This covers 32 of the 53 Teignbridge Parishes and Newton Abbot Wards.
- 56 Wildlife Wardens have completed introductory training. This has been achieved using the Introductory Training Handout, followed by a Zoom meeting for an average of 5 WWs at a time, to ensure plenty of time for discussion and to check that key principles, including the WW Code of Conduct, have been understood.
- 13 WWs have received basic wildflower identification training during the last few weeks. We provided 3 courses in woodland, for 4-5 WWs at a time, whilst working in a socially distanced way.
- 5 WWs from Ogwell (and our Coordinator) have undertaken 'Leading Volunteers' training, covering advanced Risk Assessment, leadership and the organisational requirements for leading groups of volunteers. Individuals are required to submit a risk assessment and a 'Safety and tools talk' in order to pass the course. We are covering more than our insurance specifies – we want to be covered by insurance, but we don't want to have to use it!
- Two training sessions on Freshwater Invertebrates are scheduled over the next week and will be held at Stover Country Park (our grateful thanks to them for permission).
- More training, in various types of wildlife identification, will be scheduled as soon as possible. After this, our aim is to provide training to our keenest WWs in carrying out habitat surveys, so that we can survey local sites which may qualify as County Wildlife Sites and identify connectivity routes to link up habitats.
- We hope to provide a training course in Planning and Development soon.
- Several training documents have been uploaded to the ACT website <https://www.actionclimateteignbridge.org/projects/>. These contain advice on habitat creation and habitat management, guidance on species and habitat identification, as well as information on how to work safely. We will continue to upload more documents in any areas that are needed.
- We have booked two visits to see Ambios's rewilding project at Sharpham Farm. These visits were offered to Wildlife Wardens, as well as members of ACT's Ecology and 4Fs (Food, Farming, Forestry and Fisheries) groups.

Projects: most of our WWs have started one or more projects, either working in Parish teams, in cross-Parish teams, or alone. The range of projects includes:

- Providing monthly updates for Parish Newsletters and Councils.

- A monthly podcast, reporting on WW activity in the District and giving wildlife information <https://devonwildlifewarden.wordpress.com/>.
- Parish species lists, where anyone in the Parish can submit records.
- Working with their local Parish/Town council to plant trees, wildflowers and hedges.
- Working with the District Council to improve a local cemetery, by getting funding from local Councillors to plant a hedge, establish wildflowers and install a bench.
- Taking part in the Westcountry Rivers Trust Citizen Science Investigation to monitor the quality of Teignbridge Rivers and Streams. This project currently involves 9 WWs.
- Checking Planning Applications, using the Teignbridge Weekly List to ensure that we respond to anything important.
- Writing statements against activities that are damaging to wildlife and advising on good practices.
- Managing, or helping to manage, local open spaces/meadows owned by the Parish Council.
- Following up the possibility of establishing a new nature area, owned by DCC, for a local community.
- Promoting wildlife gardening throughout the parish by providing certificates/plaques to families who fulfil certain criteria. One parish has already given away over 50 plaques!
- Organising a wildflower and seed distribution event. Over 100 plants were given away, along with lots of seeds and information sheets.
- Distributing wildlife identification posters throughout the community.
- Organising toad patrols. One parish helped 44 toads on one night! Also, increasing awareness of hedgehogs on roads and putting up signs.
- Recording sounds in nature and uploading them to aporee.org, so that local parishioners can enjoy nature even if they can't get outside.

Future Aims:

- Make contact with all Parish Councils that don't have Wildlife Wardens, to make sure that they know about the Scheme and can help find their own WW. (nb we didn't do this earlier, as we didn't have the capacity or the infrastructure to enrol and train any more WWs).
- Consolidate and improve the website, recording systems and training content.

Ecology Group Supporting the WWs:

- **Responding to Planning Applications:** giving Local-Plan-referenced grounds for objections as well as mitigation required if the application is accepted. Four of these have been lodged so far.
- **Providing training:** Freshwater Invertebrate Courses are being led by Dave Smallshire and Sue Smallshire. Wildflower courses have been led by Mary Rush and Audrey Compton. The Leading Volunteers Course was led by Audrey Compton, with a lot of input from the Teignbridge District Council Ranger Team (Thank you!).
- **Jules** has helped set up the Wildlife Warden sub-domain website and has helped with a multitude of other technical details.
- **Betina and Mary** have continued to provide support in many, many different ways.

Working with other groups:

- Audrey has met with Penny Mason of Devon Wildlife Trust, who is leading their new Community initiative 'Wilder Communities'.
- Audrey has met several times with Devon Local Nature Partnership who are developing Wild about Devon, which is setting up website support for anyone, throughout Devon, who wants to carry out WW-type work and is supporting Parish Councils who want to have a Councillor who will champion wildlife and help them carry out their legal responsibilities to biodiversity.
- Dave Smallshire, Mary Rush, Barry Henwood, Flavio, and Audrey have been working with the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre to make sure that recording systems are of maximum benefit to everyone involved. Results are very encouraging!

- Flavio contacted the Exe Estuary Management Partnership and gained information about the state of eelgrass on the Exe.
- Flavio is liaising with the Lemon Valley Biodiversity Project, which we may be able to partner (along with the National Trust, Environment Agency and DBRC).
- Audrey has been in frequent contact with Amanda Keetley of Devon Environment Foundation (DEF), our main funders, giving updates on our work and ensuring that we can share our progress with any other organisations.
- Audrey has met with Briony of the North Devon Biosphere, who hope to develop a similar scheme to ours.

Funding:

Devon Environment Foundation has awarded us £7,500 which will be paid in October 21.

This has enabled us to increase Flavio's hours, to nearly cover the excellent work he is doing.

It also means we will have enough funding to cover over half of our 2nd year of the Scheme.

We will be applying to local funders to cover the remainder of our 2nd year costs.

Many thanks to DEF, the Nineveh Trust, Jackie Hook (DCC Locality Fund), DNPA, the Teignbridge Energy Community's Community Fund - and to individuals; you have all been so generous in funding us.